

Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC)

**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE (SDPC)
STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING**

Cableland, Official Residence of the Mayor of Denver
Denver, CO

February 1, 2005
10:00am – 2:30pm

Meeting Summary

In Attendance:

Members:

Alexandra Hall, Nancy McCallin, Gary Bien, Ledy Garcia-Eckstein, Roger Smith, Kimberly Tulp, Mary Beth Susman

Council Staff:

Booker T. Graves, Aron Diaz, Glenn Little

Others:

Elise Lowe-Vaughn, Doug Glynn, Amy Arquilla, Mark Davidson, Pam Smith, Sue Carparelli, Mark Pingrey, Nancy Smith, Pat Buys, Mary Gershwin, Roy Vanderford, Skip Paterson, Leroy Williams, Jenna Langer

Meeting:

- I. Welcome and Introductions – Mark Pingrey, Chair of the CWDC, called the meeting to order. Those in attendance introduced themselves.
- II. Roger Smith, Co-Chair of the SDPC, gave an overview of the agenda and an overview of current projects that the SDPC is working on. He discussed a recent LED workshop in Washington, DC which introduced a new technology that will allow you to see where jobs are and where people live, showing how far they have to commute to work.
- III. Booker gave an overview of WIA and the goals and mission of the Council. He presented the question of what can the Council do to enhance the workforce in Colorado, and the CWDC should craft policies that work with Colorado agencies.

- IV. Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) helps communities thrive in a knowledge and skills based economy. Founded in 1991, CSW is a national non-profit policy, research, and consulting organization. Their work is driven by a belief that effective policy arises from visionary thinking and innovative practice. CSW has worked in 43 states with leaders who see strategic economic and workforce solutions as key to ensuring that their communities thrive.

Need to build on assets within partnership agencies. What are their core challenges, strategies, and top priorities? How can the Council help, and what can the agencies provide to the Council?

- V. Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) – the Colorado Paradox is that Coloradoans are highly educated, but students are not being sent to college. The College and Colorado Campaign eliminates barriers to college, increases skills development to prevent remediation, and looks to lower the cost of college attendance. The long-term goal is a sustained campaign of five years at a cost of \$15,000,000 in public and private funds. The campaign will consist of three aspects: air (public service announcements), ground (grass roots outreach), and policy (working with state legislators to set new policies). The key factors are K-12, higher education, and the business sector. The Commission needs to work with existing groups to address all of the issues that are preventing students from attending college.

The Division of Vocational Rehab (DVR) – 70% of the unemployed are in the disability community. The biggest stumbling block is the lack of access to employers with an open-mindedness about those with disabilities. DVR is having to do more with less (cuts in the General Assembly), with a federal match of 4:1. There has been a loss of staff due to age and career stage, and an increase in mental health customers. The strategies to address issues are: legislative educational events, working on internal morale, a training session to focus on tomorrow's leaders, a succession plan for new counselors, ways to develop employment (better communication system with employers), and specific training for counselors (on specific client issues). DVR really needs more employers with an open-minded stance and needs to better educate legislators. DVR can offer the Council people who need jobs and want to contribute to the community.

Colorado Department of Labor & Employment (CDLE) – the major issue for labor is that employers need specialists and people can not find jobs due to having skills that are too general. Need to

engage key federal partners in Colorado to take advantage of available federal dollars. Math, Science, and Technology are the major areas of employment and children need to be able to get excited about science. By the 7th grade, you can tell what path kids will take in their career. There is a need to pass on knowledge to the next generation in order to keep the workforce stable. CDLE challenges include WIA Reauthorization which affects the system structurally and monetarily, partners are not contributing to overhead costs at the local level, WIA, Wagner-Peyser, etc. will be combined into block grants, one-time grants are ending in the coming year, and with the improving economy, budgets will be cut. CDLE goals are to build system capacity to train more workers for high-demand occupations (Healthcare grant), the e-Portal (learning management system), and creating high-growth initiatives.

Colorado Department of Education (CDE) – there are three core issues: Identity, Connectivity, and Funding. There is a high probability that funding would be lost with WIA Reauthorization. The education system is responsible for so many different areas, but only those students that make measurable progress (grade growth) can be counted as progress. CDE is trying to work with K-12, Higher Education, etc., but there is a firewall between the groups. A major challenge is that CDE can't market too much to youth as an alternative to high school because that would increase the dropout rate. \$500,000 has been released for workforce centers and Higher Education to work together.

Labor Market Information (LMI) – provides labor information to help with strategic planning for guiding the direction of the workforce centers. LMI can calculate what industries youth are being hired in to and can determine what areas they need to commute from. Currently, the group is experiencing a lot of knowledge attrition through retirement of staff. They need the Council and the workforce staff to continue to give feedback about LMI products and services.

Colorado Community College System (CCCS) – fastest growing and largest provider of higher education classes. One half of the state's minority higher education population attend classes at a community college. All students are accepted because there are no admission requirements beyond age limit. CCCS challenges include funding (35% drop in state aid) which is not made up with tuition increases, there has been a 16.7% drop in funding per student compared to an 8.7% decrease among all higher education students. CCCS is currently maintaining the stipend level per credit hour, but there are holes in the statewide budget that could cause

further cuts in the CCCS and all of higher education. The Council can support the CCCS with pieces of legislation that are currently being considered. The system needs to be marketed. Demographics are a challenge (baby boomers are retiring, and baby busters are entering the workforce), retention and graduation rates need to be improved, and the issues with nursing programs which consists of 65% of all higher education nursing programs need to be addressed.

- VI. Local Perspective (Pat Buys and Ledy Garcia-Eckstein) – customer service is the top priority of workforce centers, as well as business services. Training occurs on a day-to-day basis. Operating a workforce center is really a juggling act. On a daily basis you handle HR management, facility management, scheduling, maintenance, program operation, compliance requirements, having to be responsive to the community and the government sector, meeting local and state requirements, administrative requirements, EEO matters, budgets, accounting, MIS, community partner relations, local and state-level events, and workforce board support. Workforce centers need the right people for the board to function. A major challenge is the move to a demand driven system.
- VII. Employer Perspective – the workforce centers need more help with how to be strategic in marketing. They need more LMI data to get hot employment prospects and they need to cultivate more relationships that produce real job listings. Business representatives need to be recruited for their Boards. They should receive more recognition for centers' positive actions through editorials and personal interest stories in the media. The dominant factor in the conversation about workforce is Where is the funding coming from next? Workforce regions should find the projects first, then look for funding. They need to tap more resources in the private sector. In the business sector, the focus is how does this help our profits today? Regions should develop a private sector mentality. They can't be all things to everyone and they need to diversify funding and bring unconventional partners into the process.
- VIII. What are the changes in behavior among employers, workers, and training and education that should be taking place? Which priorities will the SDPC work on from those that are presented? Partnering with Economic Development is a key factor in workforce success, need to find where workforce can connect with Economic Development missions.

What one compelling goal is the CWDC driven to work on?

- IX. Focus Points:
- Build employer awareness of workforce system
 - Engage employers
 - Coalesce leadership around one idea (from the top down)
 - Where is K-12 and why aren't they at the table?
 - Clear policy and strategy around education, economic development, and workforce
 - Balance being opportunistic and strategic
 - Look at industry sectors (unique expertise)
 - Build on distinction of educational excellence
- There will be a follow-up meeting to further define the goals and focus of the SDPC and the CWDC.